

Biden warns consumers to be wary of aggressive door-to-door sales

Wilmington – Attorney General Biden’s Consumer Protection Unit has learned of several incidents where Delaware homeowners have received unsolicited visits by salespersons who attempt to convince them to switch utility providers. The salespersons claim the company they represent can guarantee lower prices, and have been described as being aggressive in convincing homeowners to change their energy provider by signing a contract on the spot. Consumers who resisted the sales pitch have reported being told that they would be contacted by additional sales representatives; some consumers have encountered these door-to-door solicitors on multiple occasions.

“Consumers should be very careful when being approached by salespeople who make unsolicited visits to their homes,” said Attorney General Biden. “Above all, always ask for identification, resist high pressure sales tactics, and carefully read any contract presented by a salesperson before signing it.”

In Delaware, energy services are open to competition among energy service providers. Visits that consumers receive may, in fact, be from representatives of legitimate companies who are licensed to sell power to Delaware consumers. However, Delaware’s [Home Solicitation Sales Act](#) protects consumers from high-pressure door-to-door sales tactics and ambiguous or misleading contracts. That law also limits door-to-door sales to the hours of 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and requires door-to-door salespersons to prominently display a state-issued identification card.

Biden's office recommends consumers follow these tips if they receive an unsolicited visit at their home by a salesperson who claims to represent an energy company:

- Demand to see identification
- Be wary if a salesperson claims that they represent your current energy provider and are on-site to save you money through your current service
- Never share your utility bill with a stranger who shows up uninvited at your door, as it contains personal information
- Resist high pressure tactics to sign contracts on the spot
- Read the fine print of any contract before you sign – pay special attention to the length of a contract and any provision that allows for increases in rates over time

Biden advised consumers who have concerns about the conduct of a door-to-door salesperson selling energy services to consider taking these steps:

- Contact the Delaware Public Service Commission (PSC) which regulates utilities in the State. The [PSC website](http://depssc.delaware.gov/electric/elecsupplierinfo.pdf) provides information about energy deregulation in Delaware and a list of Delaware certified electric suppliers at <http://depssc.delaware.gov/electric/elecsupplierinfo.pdf>. Contact information for the agency is available on its website at <http://www.depssc.delaware.gov/contact.shtml>, and an online complaint form is posted online at http://smu.depssc.delaware.gov/cgi-bin/mail.php?frm_cmplnt.
- Contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit, which enforces the Delaware Home Solicitation Sales Act, by calling its toll-free Consumer Hotline at 800-220-5424 or e-mail consumer.protection@delaware.gov.

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